

SITUATION REPORT NO. 1
INCIDENT NO. 2005-121
DATE: October 5, 2005 Time: 9:30 p.m.

TO: Governor John Hoeven
State Capitol
Bismarck ND 58505

1. **NATURE OF DISASTER:** **Severe Winter Storm** – A record-breaking early winter storm with heavy snow, rain and high winds moved through portions of North Dakota on October 5, 2005, disrupting power supplies and stranding motorists.
2. **DEATHS AND INJURIES:** No deaths or injuries have been reported.
3. **DAMAGES:** A winter storm warning, issued by the Bismarck Office of the National Weather Service (NWS), indicated heavy snowfall and northerly winds of winds of 25 to 40 miles per hour (mph) are causing near blizzard conditions, particularly across open areas, making travel hazardous. Forecasters reported this storm is the earliest significant snowstorm on record in North Dakota and is producing heavy snow, prohibiting travel throughout western and north central North Dakota. The Bismarck Office of the NWS has issued a wind advisory, which is effect until 4:00 a.m., October 6.

The Grand Forks Office of the NWS issued a blizzard warning that remains in effect until 6:00 a.m., October 6. A low pressure system will move slowly east tonight with snow and strong winds of 50 mph continuing along a line from Devils Lake to Pembina. Blizzard conditions will persist in the Devils Lake Basin through the overnight hours, with up to six additional inches in some areas.

The ND Highway Patrol (NDHP) reported that the Dickinson District has 16 to 20 inches of snow on the ground, with heavy snowfall continuing. Reaching stranded motorists is a major concern, especially areas within a 20-mile radius of Dickinson.

Several motorists in the Max area and approximately 100 vehicles in the Richard-Taylor area were stranded by storm conditions. The NDHP advised motorists to remain in their vehicles until help arrives, and citizens are encouraged to remain in their homes until road conditions improve.

Of the 11 hospitals in the impacted areas, five are without power and using electrical generators. The N.D. Department of Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Section Chief reported four of the hospitals have secured adequate fuel supplies. The remaining hospital is evaluating its fuel supplies. Staffing levels for all hospitals are tight but adequate. Some hospitals have resorted to snowmobiles as a means of transporting staff to work.

The N.D. Department of Transportation (DOT) has mobilized snow removal equipment on I-94 from Hebron to the Montana border and on U.S. Highway 83 north of Washburn strictly for stranded motorists.

The NDHP closed the following roadways: I-94, from Mandan to the Montana border; U.S. Highway 2 from Berthold to Devils Lake; U.S. Highway 52, from Junction 5 to Burlington and Minot to Fessenden; U.S. Highway 83, Washburn to Underwood and Junction 200 to the Canadian border; N.D. Highway 3, from Hurdsfield to Junction 19; and N.D. Highway 5, from Junction 52 to Renville Corner and east Junction 83 to Dunseith. In the Minot and Rolla areas, no travel is advised due to snow and blowing snow causing zero visibility, snow plows have been pulled until further notice in the Rolla area. The remaining highways throughout the state are wet to snow covered to slush covered. There are scattered areas of ice reducing traffic speeds where ice, slush and/or snow exists.

On U.S. Highway 83, the NDHP reported several semi trucks jack knifed between Totten Trail and Minot.

No travel is advised in Benson, Billings, Bottineau, Bowman, Burke, Cavalier, Divide, Dunn, Golden Valley, McKenzie, McLean, Mercer, Mountrail, Oliver, Pierce, Ramsey, Renville, Rolette, Sheridan, Slope, Stark, Towner, Ward and Wells counties.

The N.D. Department of Emergency Services' (DES), Division of State Radio, reported the Belcourt and Sentinel Butte's radio towers are out of service. The Grand Forks Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) are out of service. Between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., October 5, State Radio received up to 200 calls from the public reporting power outages, stranded motorists, overdue travelers, vehicles off the roadways and inquiries as to when the closed highways will be open.

The State Operations Center (SOC) received the following reports of storm activity from local and tribal emergency managers:

Bottineau County

The Bottineau County Sheriff reported that the local public safety answering point (PSAP) was down and calls were transferred to State Radio. Intermittent power

outages in the county have been occurring throughout the day; most of the rural areas are without service.

Bowman County

Due to power outages throughout the county, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will remain activated until further notice. No travel is advised for the entire county. Officials have been delivering medications and oxygen to special needs populations.

Burke County

The Emergency Manager reported they received up to 16 inches of snow with winds. Main roads are open, there are no stranded vehicles, and many trees are down. The power was out most of the afternoon of October 5.

Dunn County

The Emergency Manager reported two McKenzie Electric Cooperative crews were stranded north of Killdeer. One McKenzie Electric Cooperative crew member who ventured out on a snowmobile to investigate an outage has been missing for several hours. A local search effort is underway.

McLean County

The Emergency Manager reported power outages exist in several cities including Turtle Lake, Garrison and intermittent power outages in Underwood. Area utility companies are working on restoring power. Roads are becoming impassable and no travel is advised. The Sheriff's Office and NDHP have reported some roads are open. The cities of White Shield, Garrison, Turtle Lake and Underwood are without power. The Underwood dispatch center has been running on generators all day.

Rolette County

Local residents have been reporting power outages to State Radio. Landline phone and pager systems are down. Power companies advised local officials that service may not be restored until noon, October 6.

Stark County

State Radio reported that a tour bus of elderly individuals was stranded for a period of time along the west bound lane of I-94. Around 200 cars were also reported stranded along I-94.

Three Affiliated Tribes

The Emergency Manager reported a substation failed, causing power outages, some intermittent, in Twin Buttes, Fort Berthold and Parshall since midnight last night. Rural residents with electric pumps are without water. Tribal officials are assessing the needs of residents.

Ward County

The Emergency Manager reported the city of Minot is experiencing intermittent power outages due to heavy snow; officials for the City Public Works Department advised no travel. On U.S. Highway 52, south of the city of Logan Hill, a 25-car accident occurred. Local power companies are trying to maneuver as much as possible to restore power to the local citizens.

4. RESOURCES:

LOCAL: Agencies monitoring conditions include local and tribal dispatch centers, law enforcement, maintenance crews, public works, emergency management officials and rural electric cooperatives.

STATE: Agencies monitoring conditions include the Governor's Office, N.D. National Guard (NDNG), State Radio Communications, N.D. Highway Patrol, N.D. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI), the N.D. Department of Health, the N.D. Department of Human Services (DHS) and the N.D. Department of Emergency Services.

FEDERAL: The NWS has been issuing periodic weather reports, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has been monitoring reports.

5. **VOLUNTEER ACTION:** The Mid-Dakota Chapter of the American Red Cross (ARC) in Minot has sheltered five families at local hotels and has opened a shelter at the Minot City Auditorium.

6. **MAJOR ACTIONS:** The NDHP, the NDNG and DOT have mobilized snow removal equipment and personnel to assist with search and rescue operations. The NDHP mobilized two 57-passenger buses. The NDNG is sending a 44-passenger bus, one 20-ton tractor trailer with a dozer, two HEMMT fuelers and a five ton wrecker.

At this time DOT snowplows are working east and west bound from Dickinson and west from Taylor on I-94 to assist motorists stranded by the storm. A similar effort is underway on N.D. Highway 83 in north central North Dakota. Efforts to assist motorists will continue along N.D. Highways 8, 22 and 85 in southwestern North Dakota and N.D. Highways 2 and 83 in north central North Dakota throughout the night. State and local agencies are also working to render assistance on secondary roads as needed. Motorists are urged not to travel on North Dakota roads throughout this storm period.

In support of local and tribal governments, the N.D. Division of Homeland Security activated the SOC.

NDDOT crews will be out by 5:00 a.m., October 6 as part of continuing efforts to clear snow-clogged roadways. NDDOT has been shifting staff members and equipment from its eastern districts to assist snow removal efforts in snow-impacted areas.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: As indicated.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No additional outside help has been requested.
9. OTHER INFORMATION: The N.D. Division of Homeland Security's Situation Reports are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is <http://www.state.nd.us/des>.

Susan Reinertson, Director
N.D. Division of Homeland Security